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FM AMEMBASSY LOME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9171
INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU, STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/W AND WHA, STATE ALSO FOR INL/AAE AND INL/LP, NSC FOR MGAVIN

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TAGS: SNAR PREL XR XY TO

SUBJECT: THE AFRICAN UNION'S INTEREST IN THE DRUG TRADE IN WEST AFRICA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 001911

¶1. Summary. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) sent its Dakar-based regional representative to Togo the week of August 3 to help launch the GOT's five-year plan to combat drugs and crime. The representative, Alexandre Schmidt, met with the Ambassador and discussed various developments in the fight against drug trafficking in West Africa. He also gave her a copy of a 2009 report on trafficking flows in West Africa. The information in the report can provide much of the information that the AU is looking for. End Summary.

¶2. Here in Togo, we have remarked on the great number of assessment trips made by various nationalities and agencies concerned with drug trafficking and other transnational crimes issues, including State's own INL. Unfortunately, few of these visits have resulted in any concrete action of assistance, especially in the areas where it is most needed, such as training for law enforcement, judicial and financial agencies involved in the fight against all aspects of transnational crime. Most recently, the UNODC regional office in Dakar helped the GOT develop a fairly comprehensive five-year Integrated National Plan to Combat Drugs and Crime. There is no funding- Togolese or other- to implement the plan, and the GOT will shortly hold another donor's conference to request financing.

¶3. During a meeting with Schmidt, we received a copy of the July 2009 report, "Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment." This is a very comprehensive document that covers all types of trafficking flows, including: cocaine from South America to Europe; oil from Nigeria to the world; cigarettes from Europe and Asia to West and North Africa; counterfeit medicines from Asia to West Africa (especially malaria drugs); victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation from West Africa to Europe; small arms to West Africa; toxic waste from Europe to Nigeria and Ghana; and workers from West Africa to Europe. Each "flow" is examined in depth, and the report provides comprehensive statistics. All are tied to the probable impact on the stability of the region and the threat to the rule of law.

¶4. Copies of the report are available from UNODC offices worldwide and from the Policy Analysis and Research Branch, UNODC, Vienna, Austria. Since the report contains even more information than the AU is requesting, it would be of value as a reference document for their interest in developing a plan. Additionally, we have heard that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is also looking to develop a regional plan to combat drugs and crime, but we have no further details.

Hawkins